

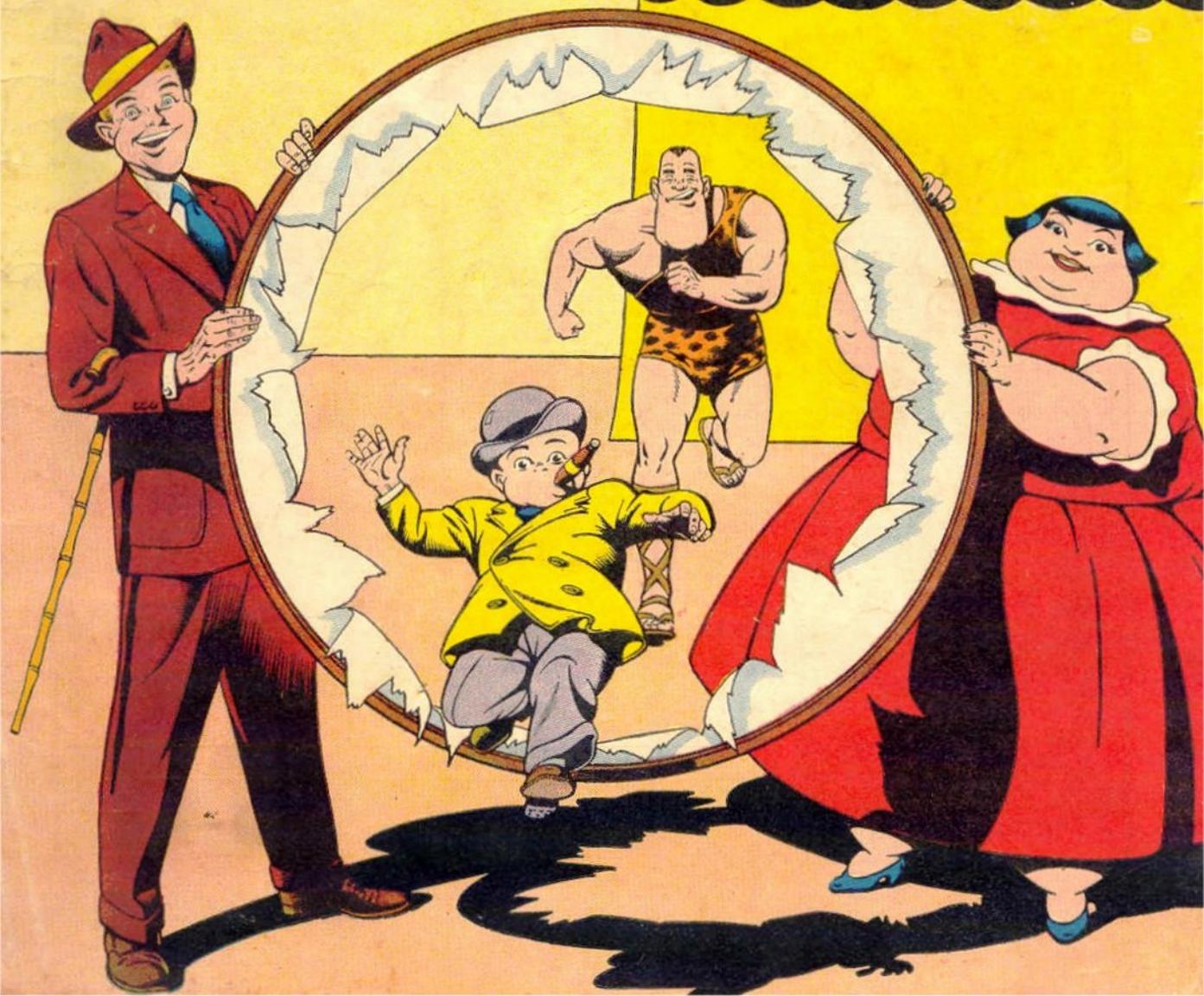
NATIONAL COMICS

DECEMBER
No. 63

10c

The **BARKER**
has a close shave
WITH
The BEARDED LADY!

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The **BARKER**
has a close shave
WITH
The BEARDED LADY!



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FOLKS! SHE'S THE
BEARDED LADY WITH
THE LONGEST BEARD
IN THE WORLD! YES,
SIR-EE! YOUR MONEY BACK
IF YOU CAN PRODUCE ANY
MAN, WOMAN OR CHILD
WITH A BEARD THAT IS
LONGER OR MORE
BEE-OO-TIFUL!

BARKER CHANGER

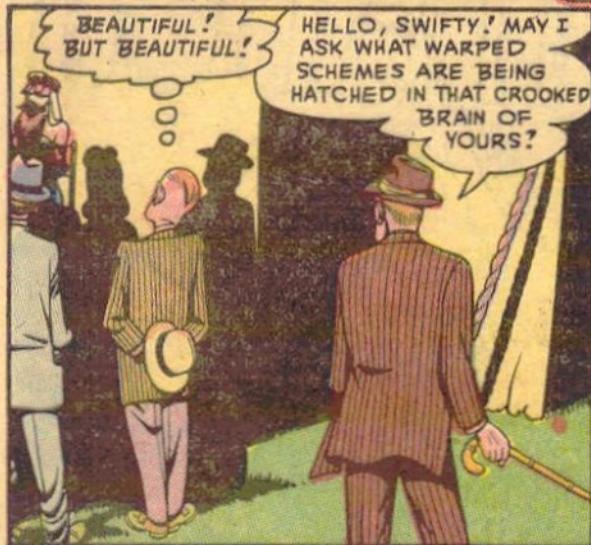
The

by
Klaus Nordin

Carnie Calahan, the genial
BARKER for Colonel Lane's
Mammoth Circus, gets in
an entanglement ... all because
of BELINDA, the bearded
lady!



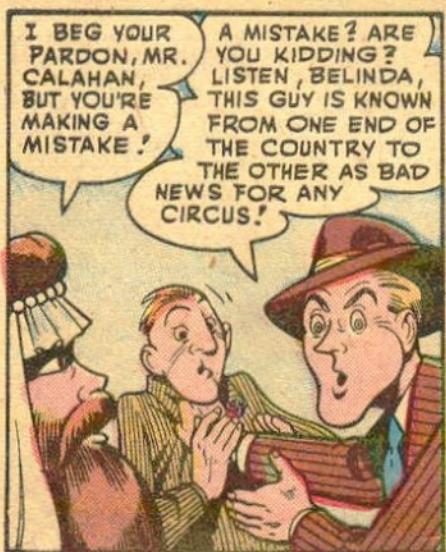
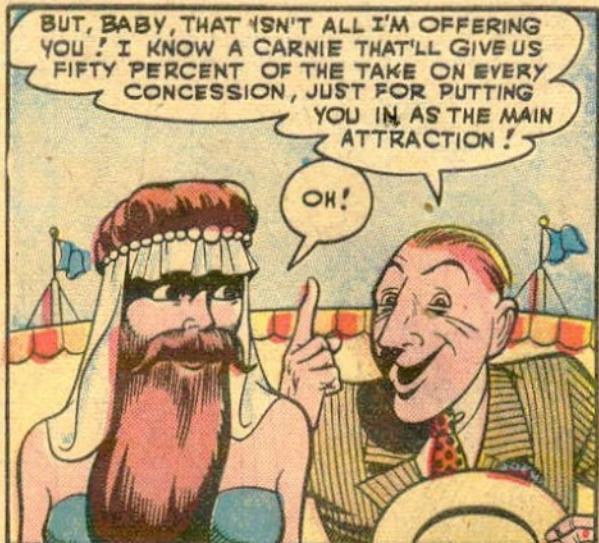
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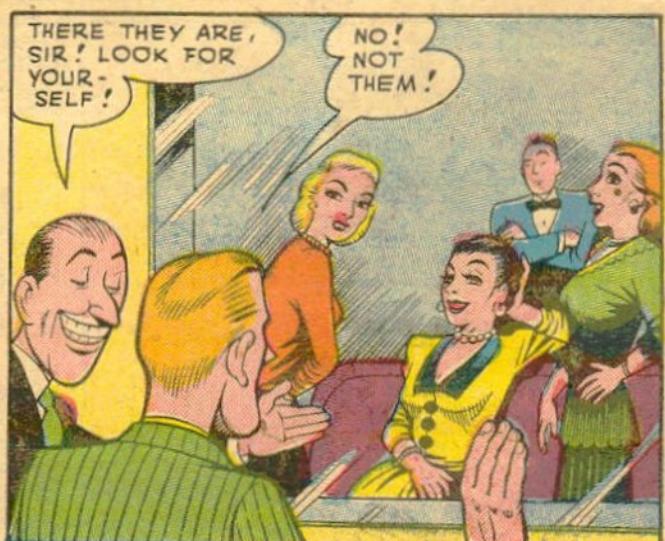
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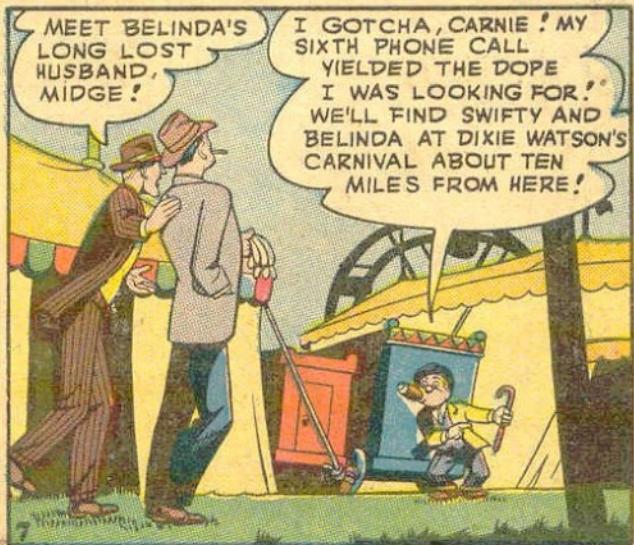
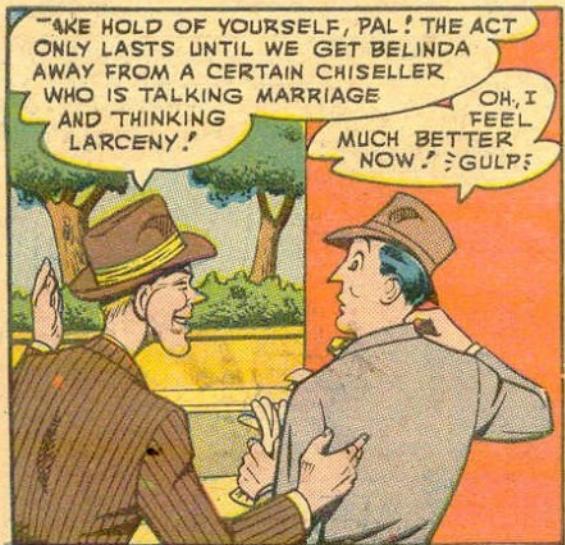
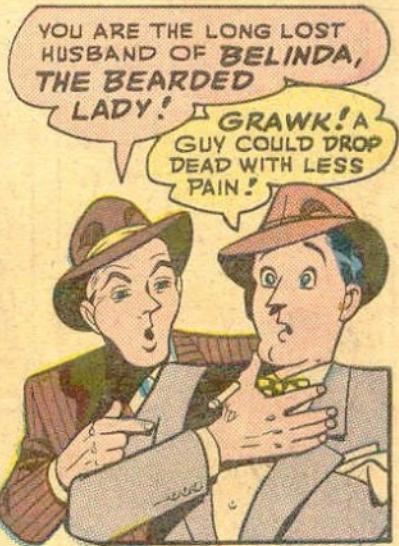
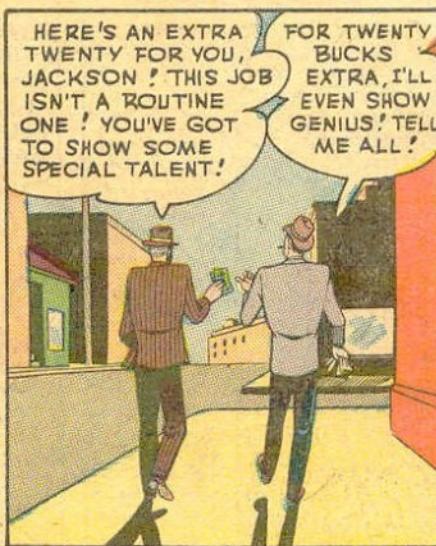
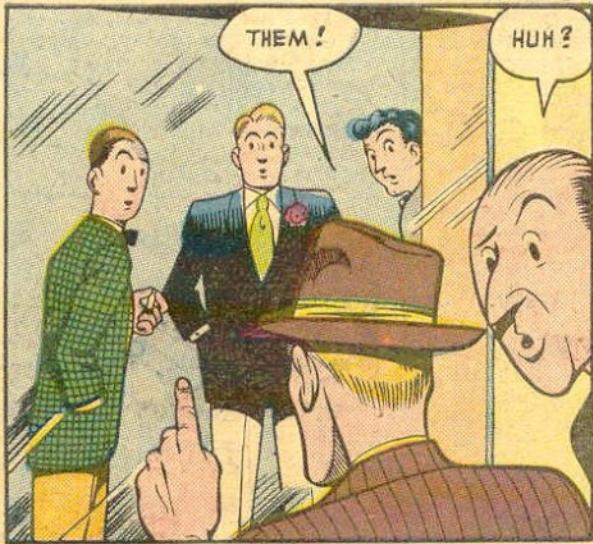
I'LL CHECK ON THE SHOWS WITHIN A HUNDRED MILE RADIUS AND FIND OUT WHICH ONE STILL LETS SWIFTY STICK AROUND!



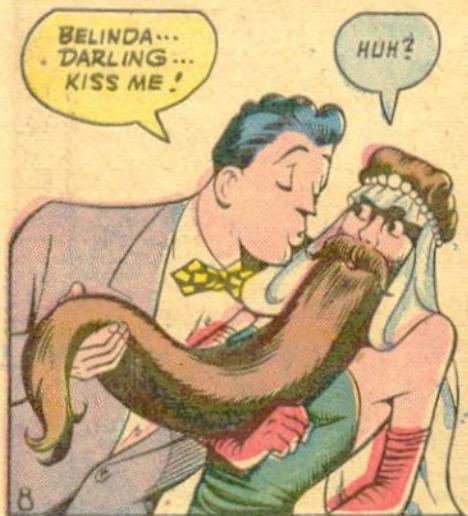
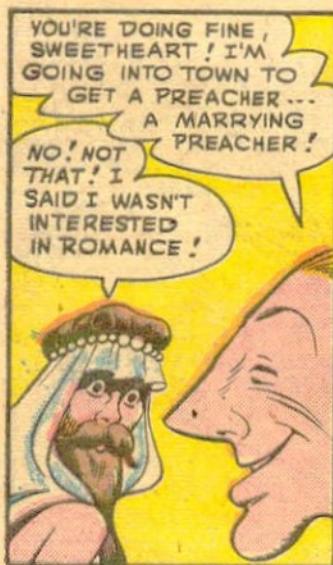
I DON'T KNOW YET! LET ME LOOK 'EM OVER!



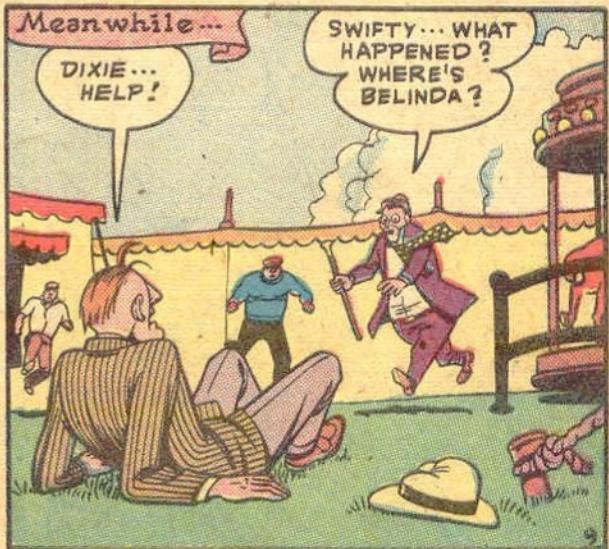
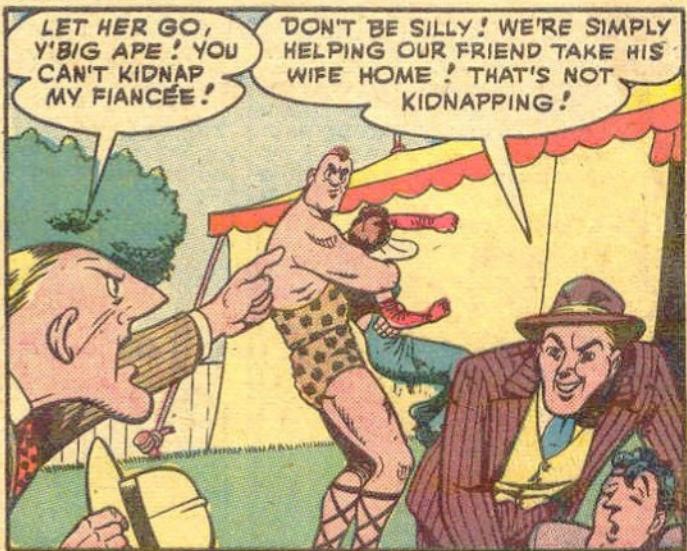
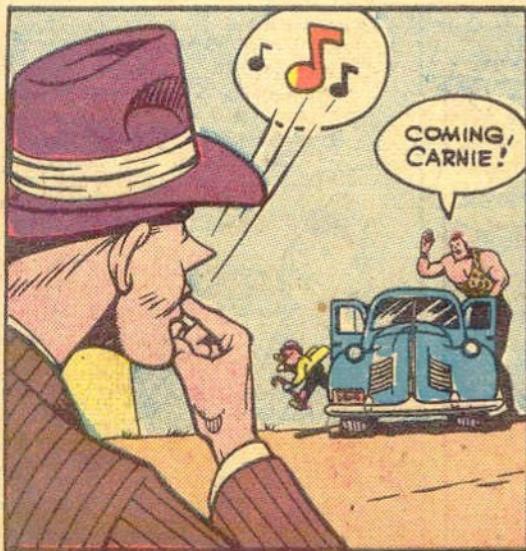
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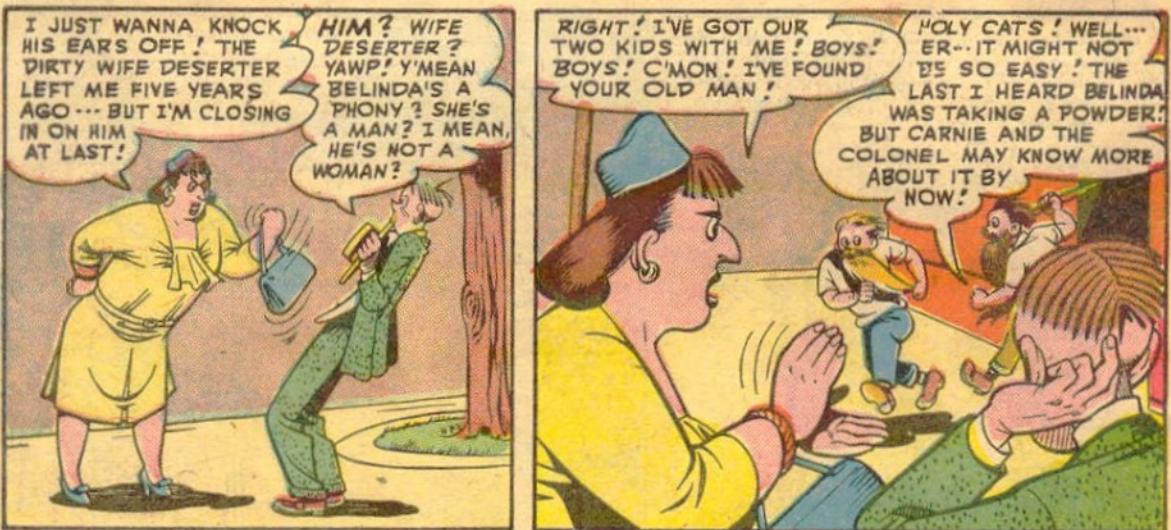
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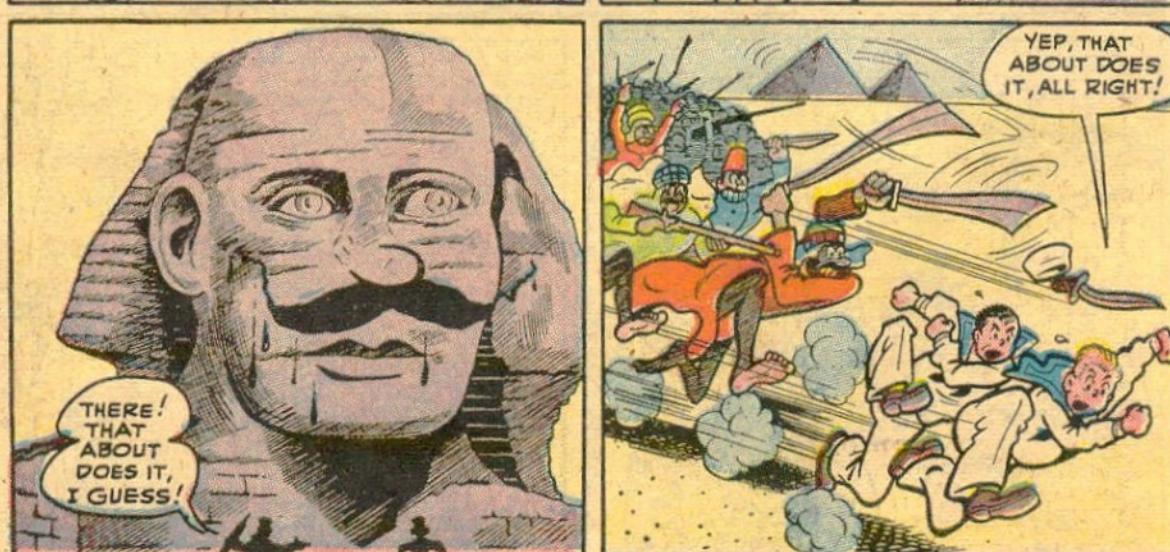
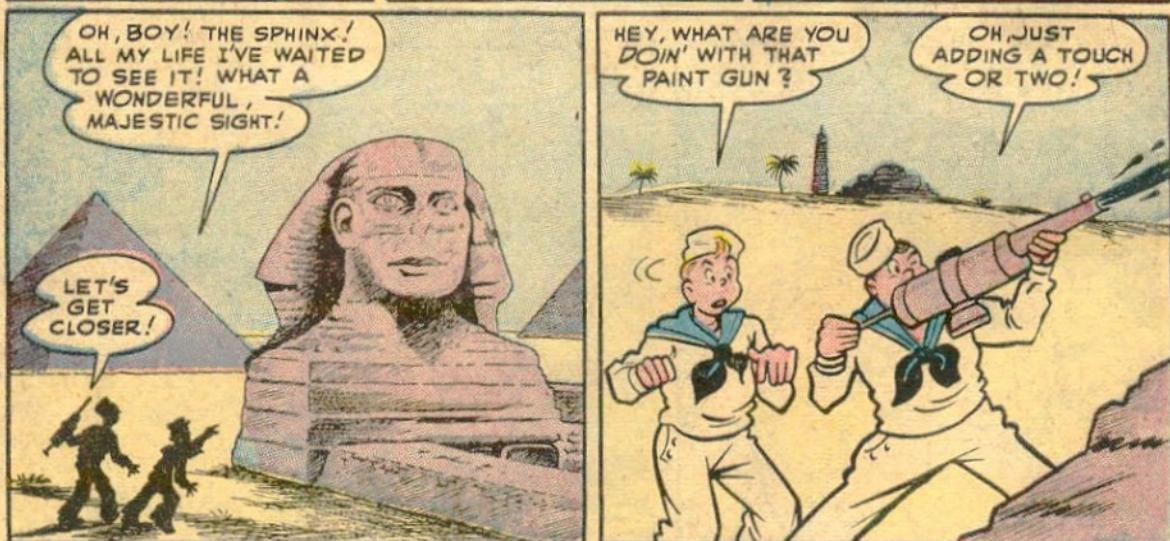
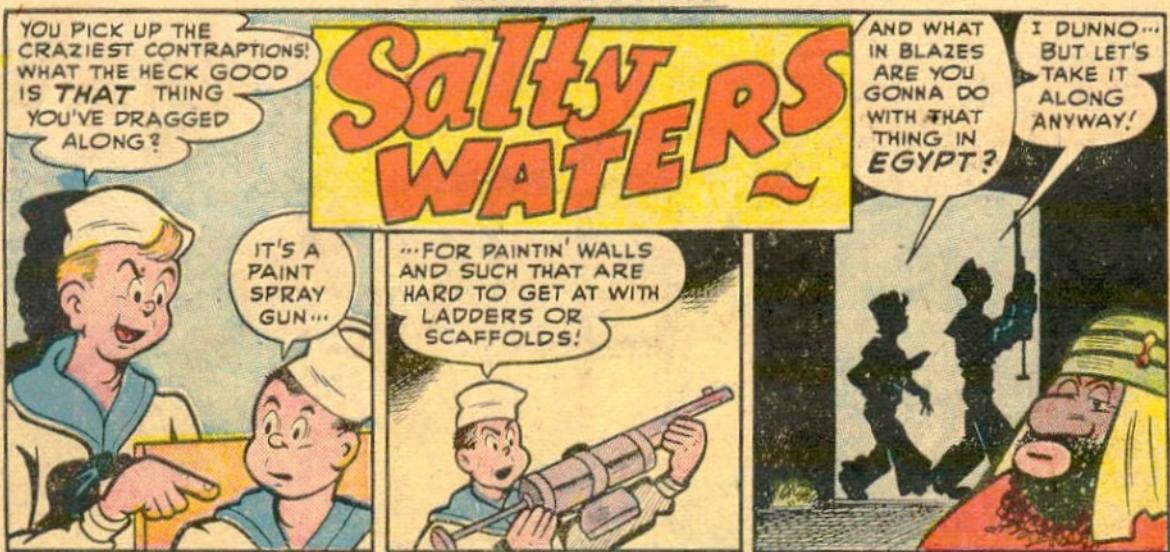


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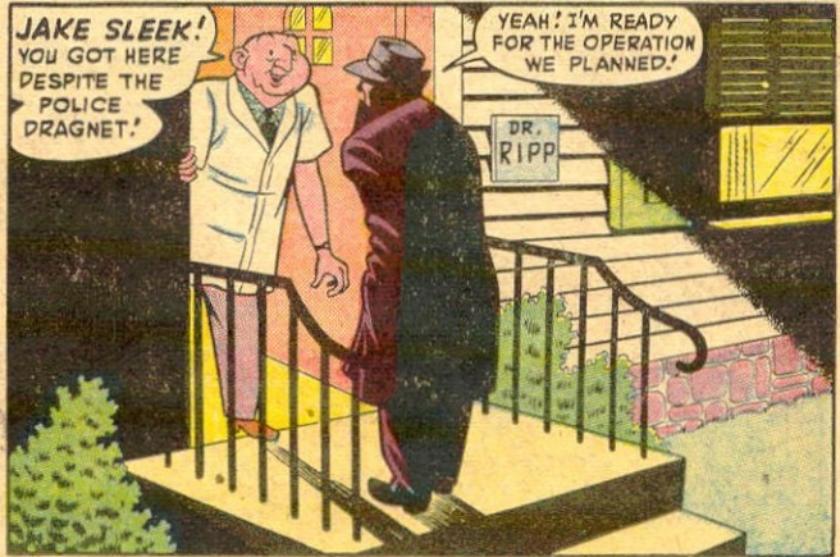
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GRANNY GUMSHOE

by
GILL
FOX

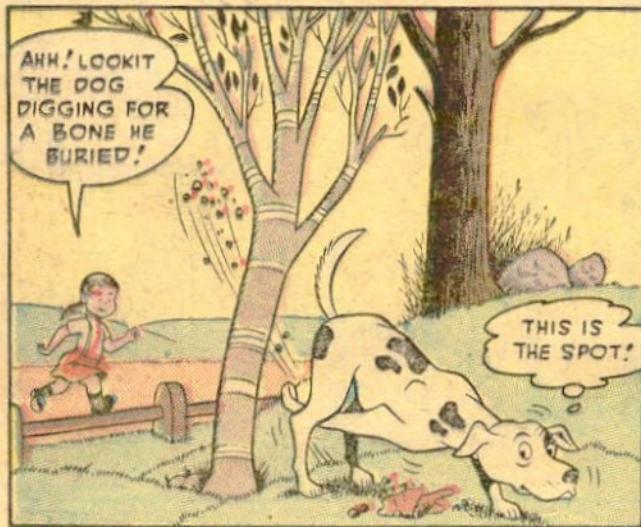


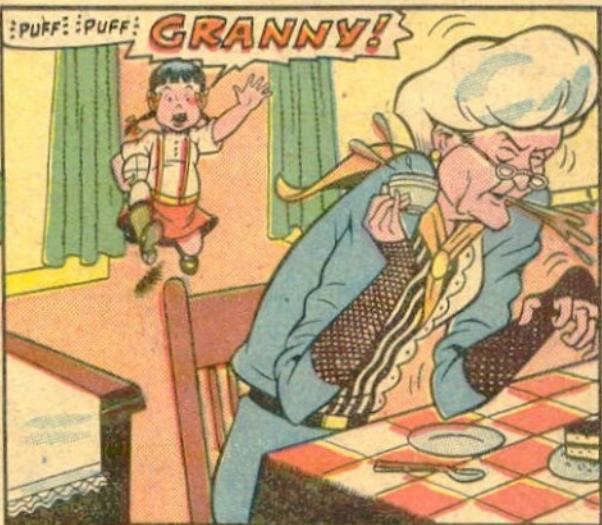
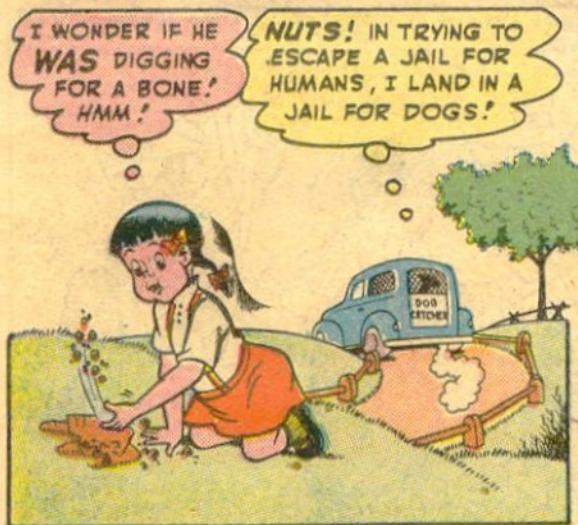
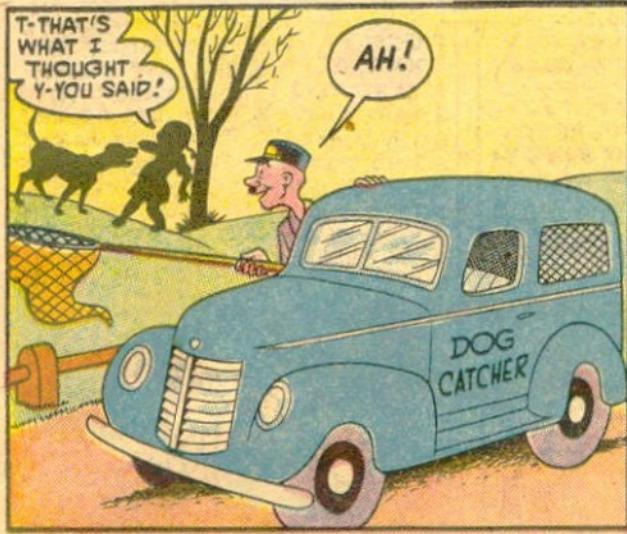
A nation-wide alarm has been given to pick up JAKE SLEEK, the master embezzler who stole one million dollars from the bank where he was employed. It's a dark night in Granny's town of Weston, when a figure darts from the shadows and rings the bell of Dr. Ripp, an underworld surgeon...



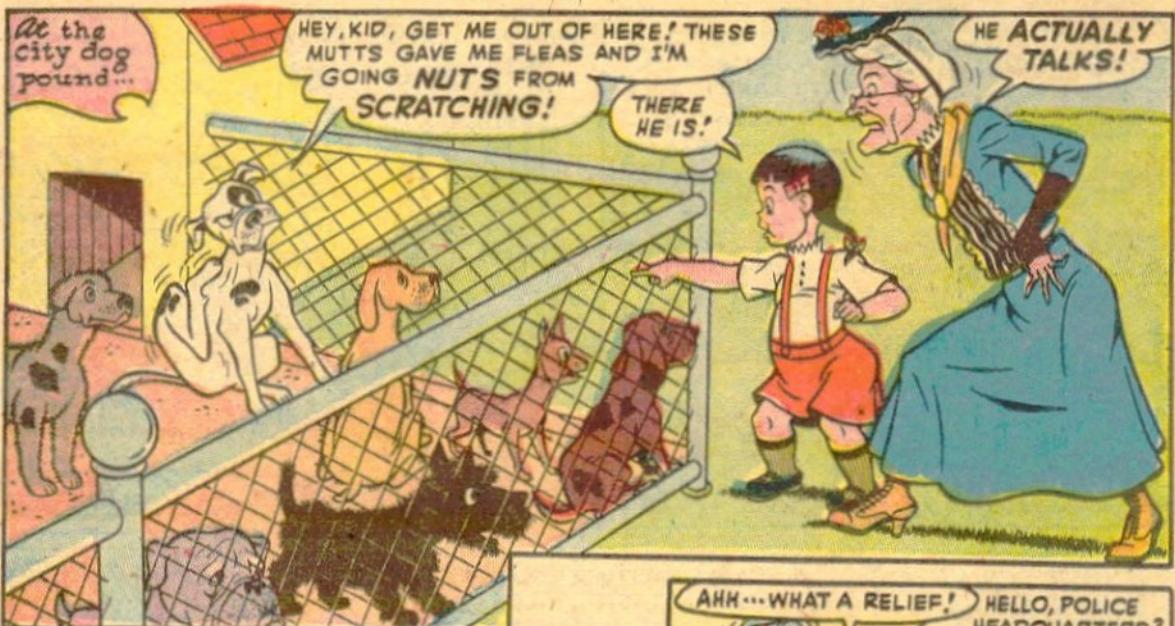
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As dawn tints the sky, an operation unique in the history of surgery has been successfully completed in the laboratory of Doctor Ripp!





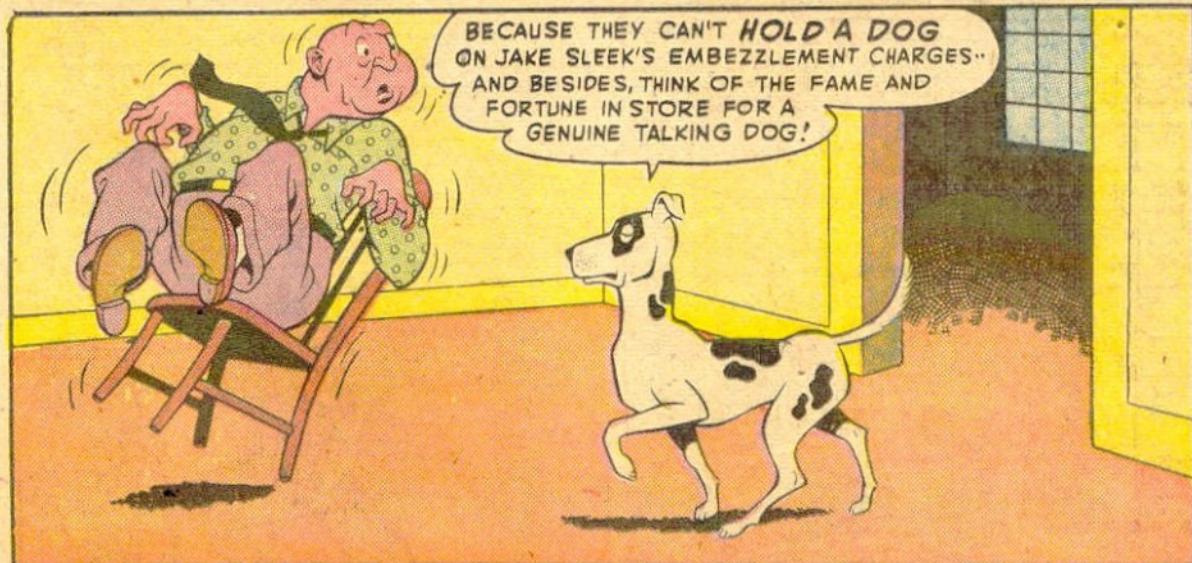
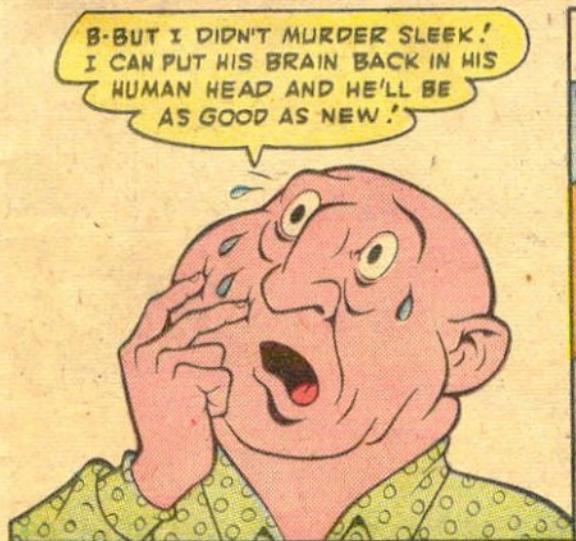
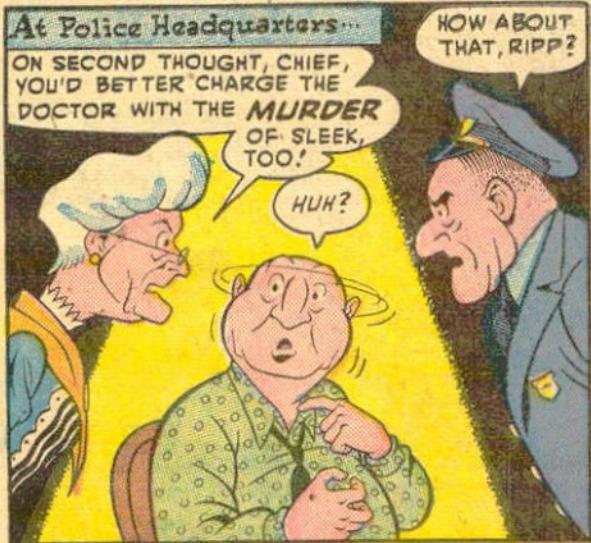
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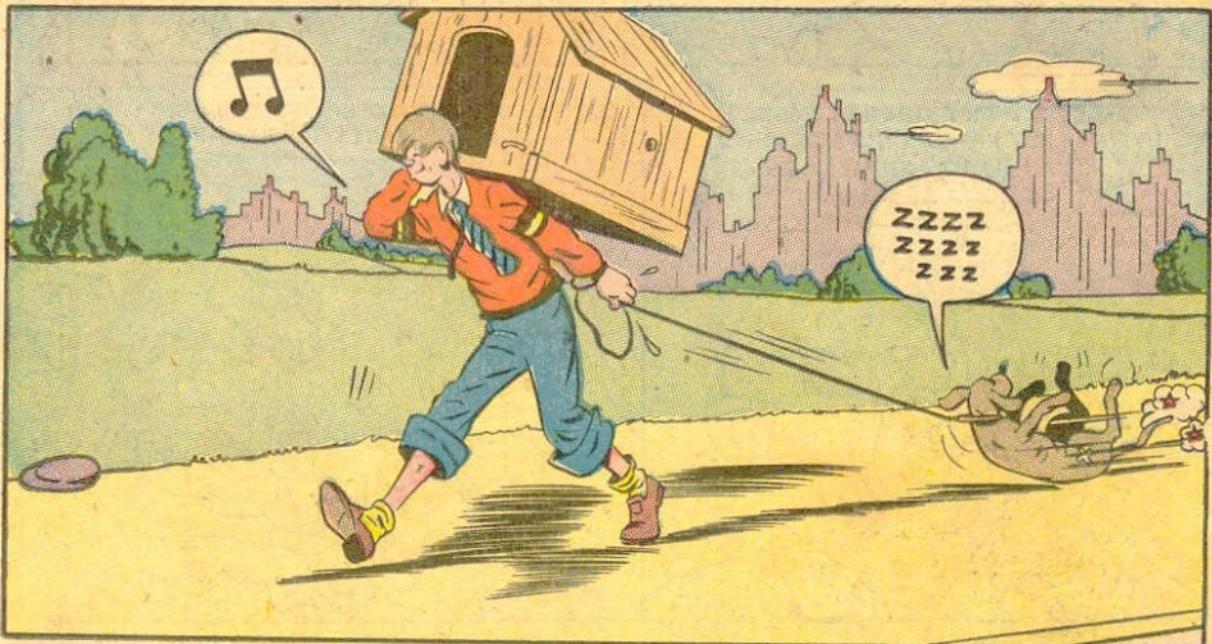
Back in
Granny's
house—
the dog
has told
his
story!

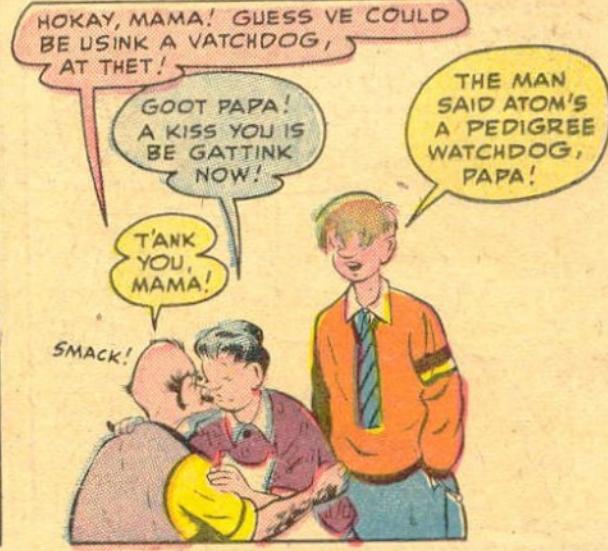
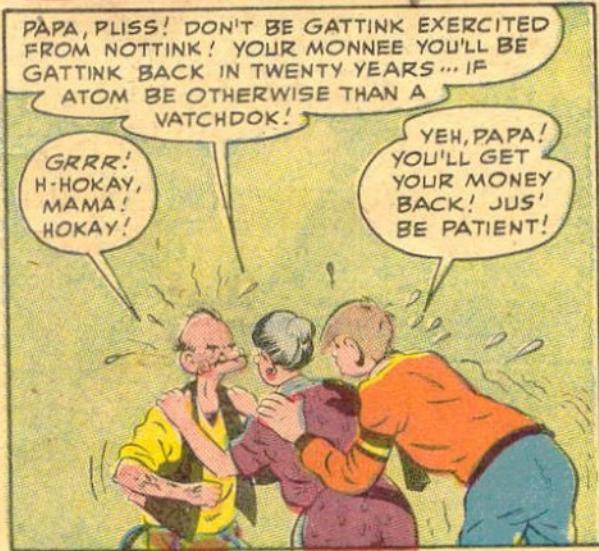


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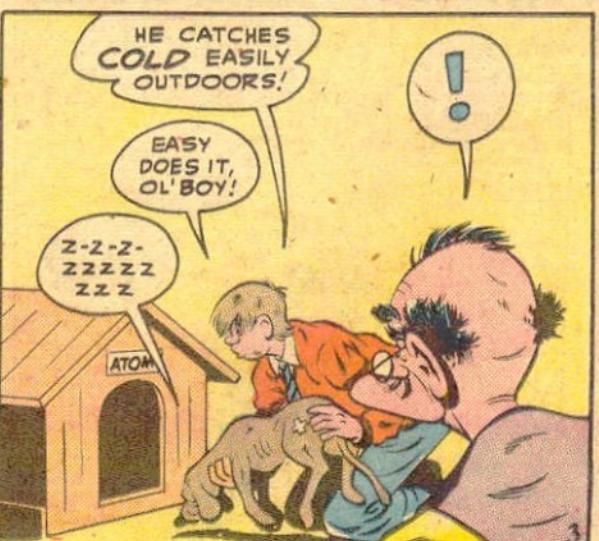
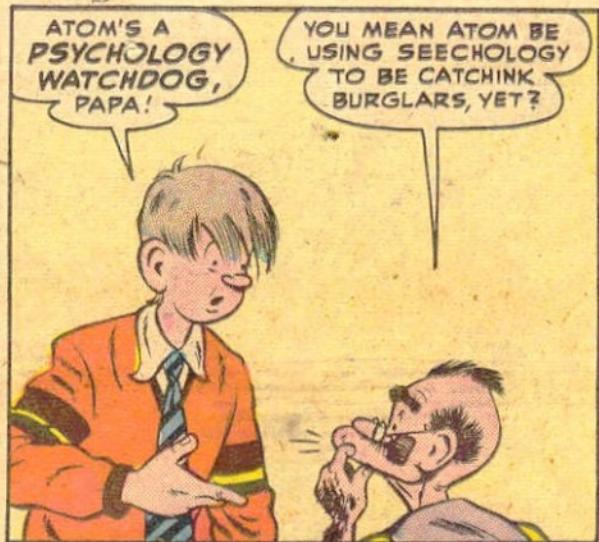


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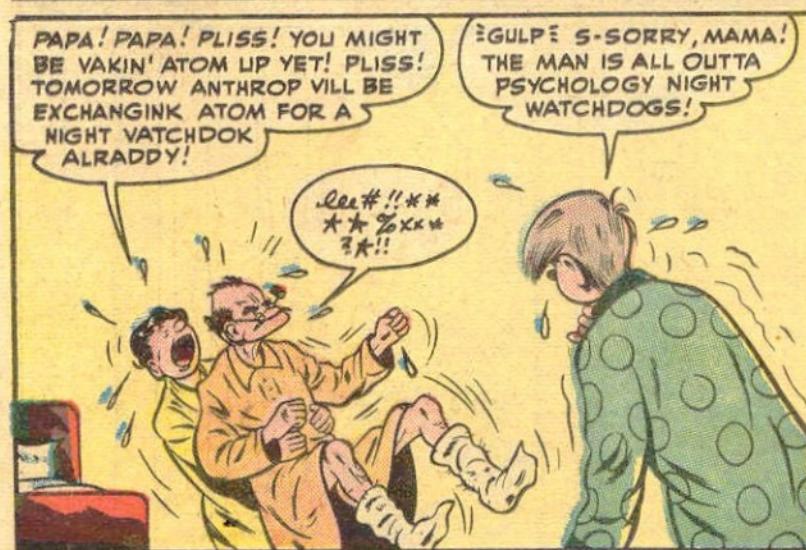
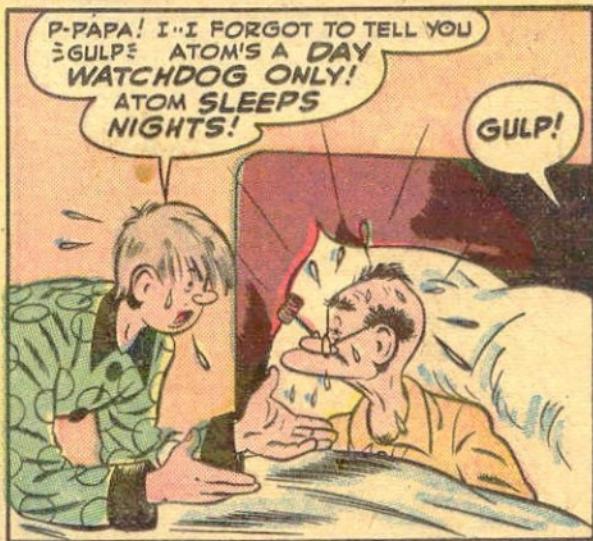
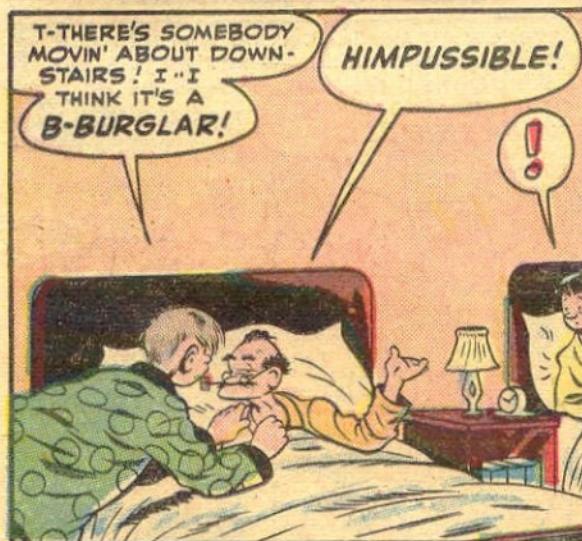
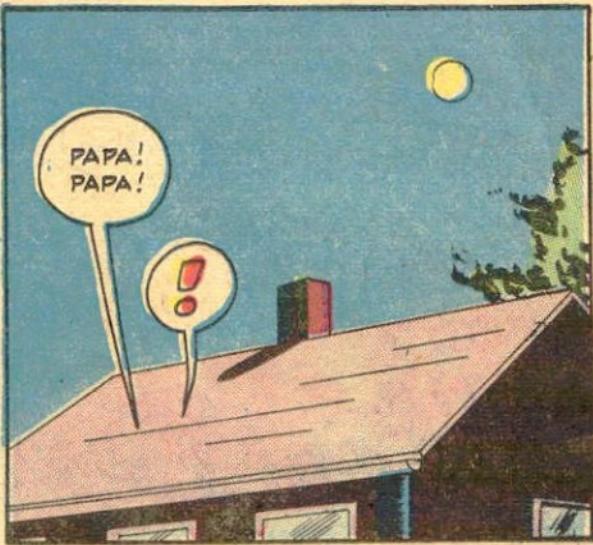




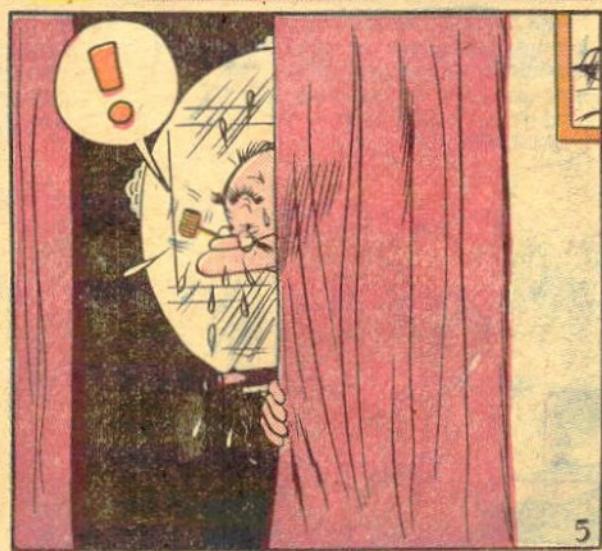
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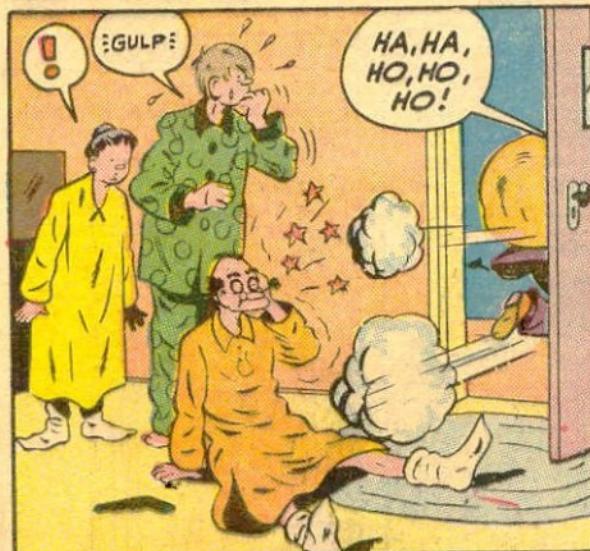


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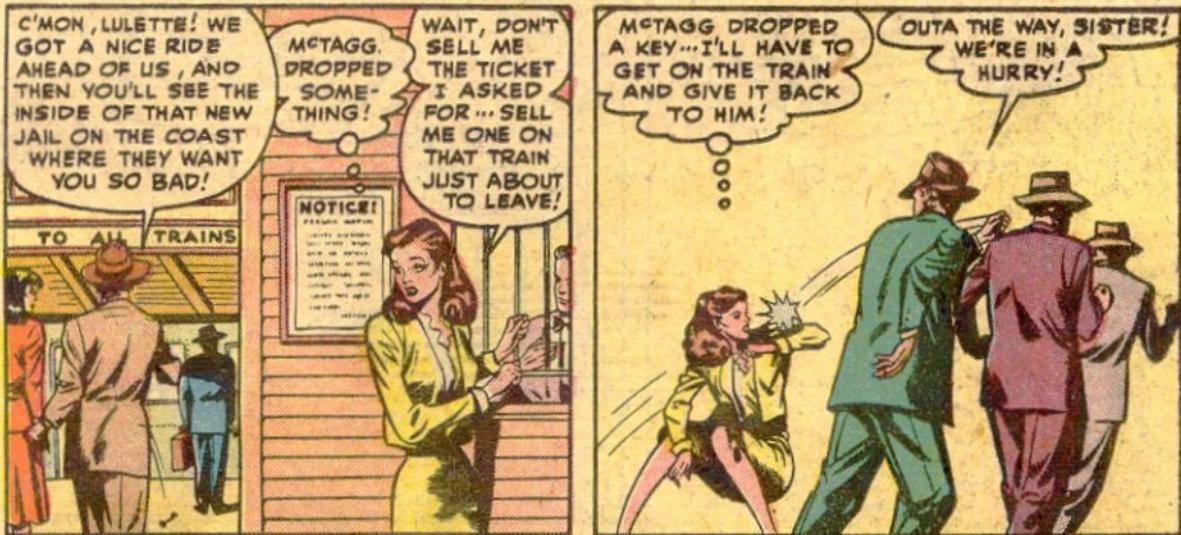




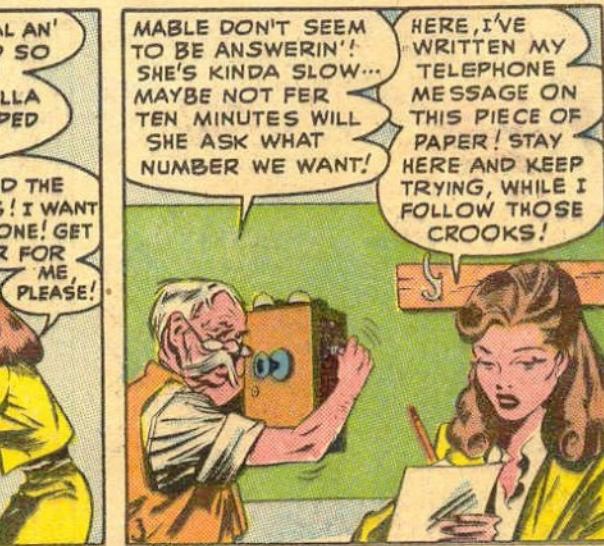
Sally O'Neill



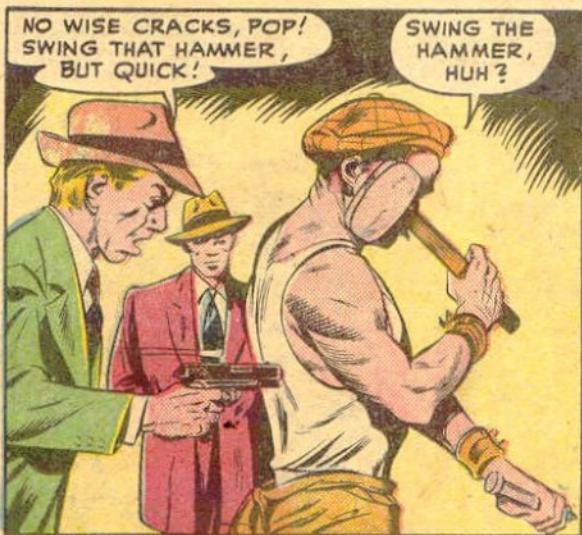
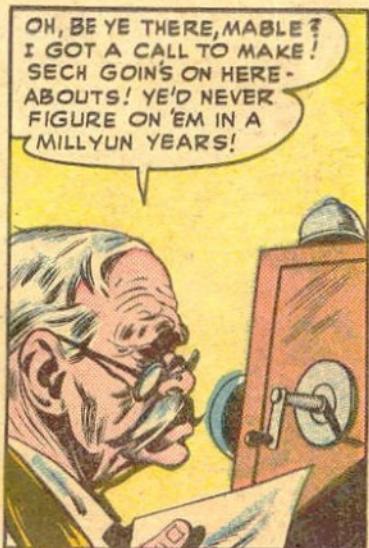
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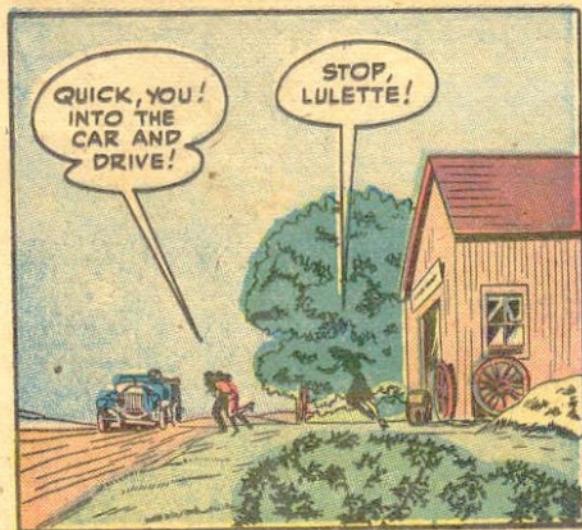
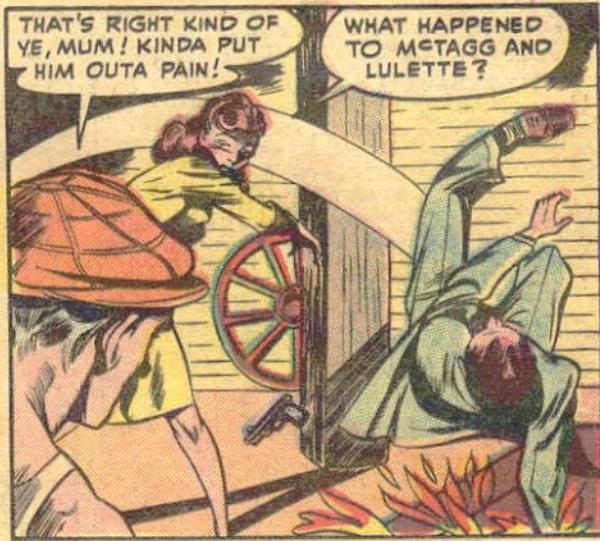
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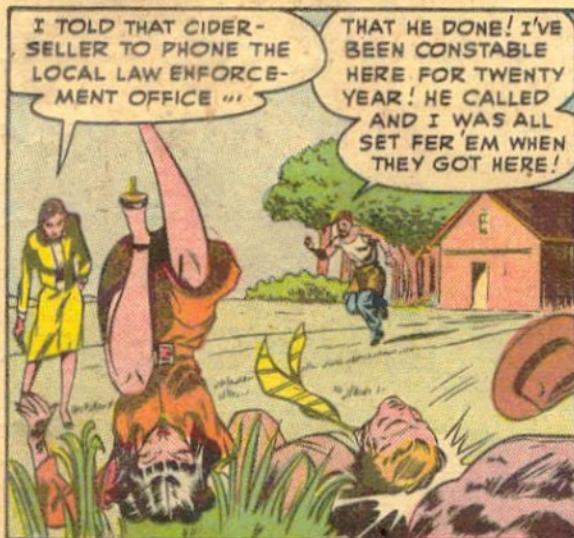
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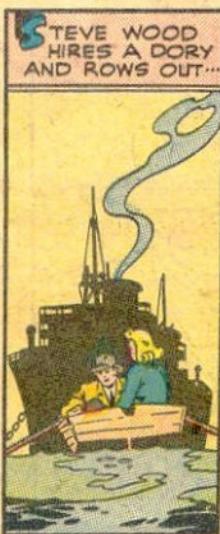
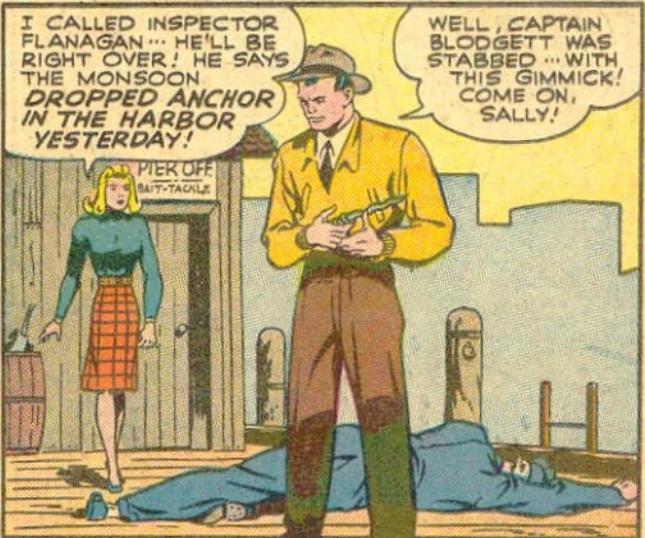
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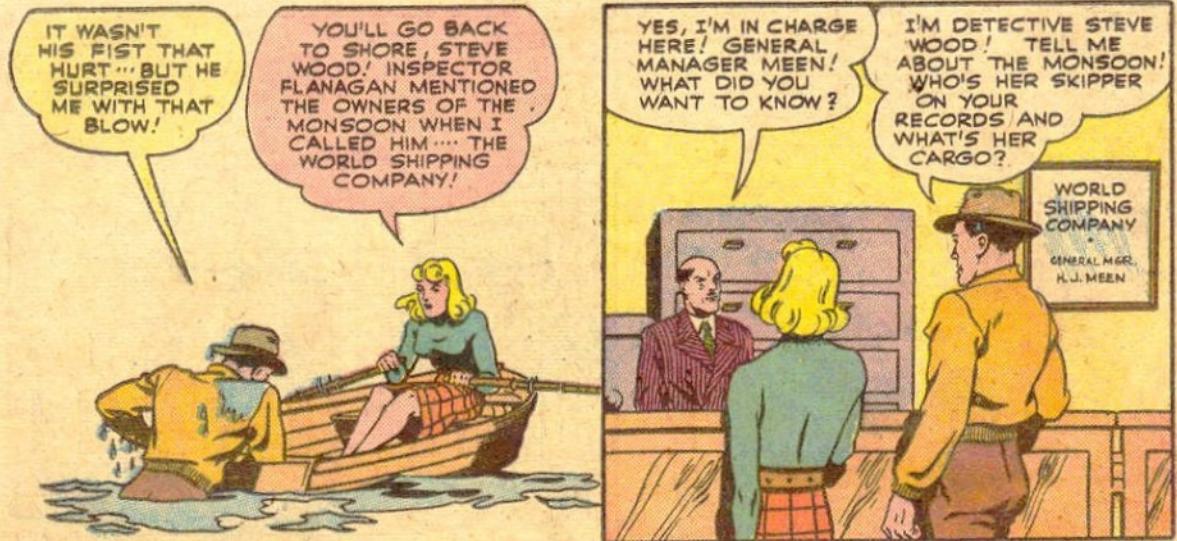
Steve WOOD



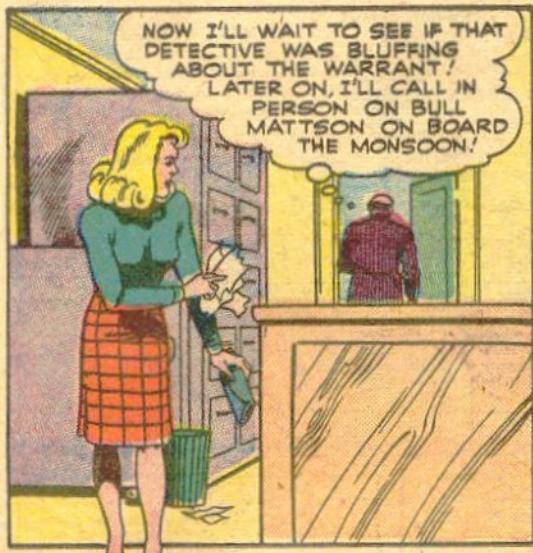
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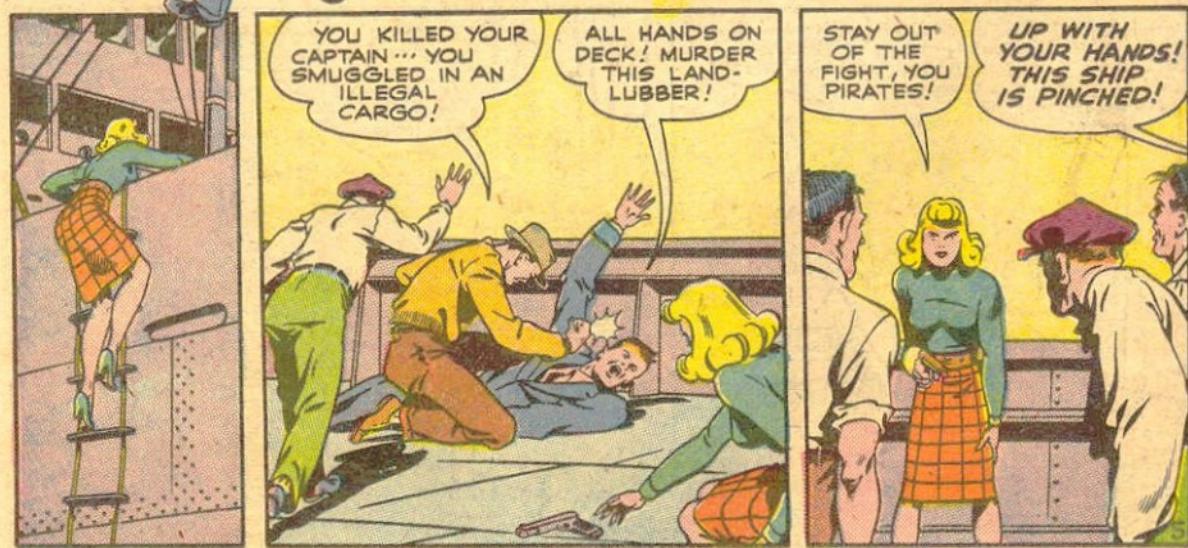
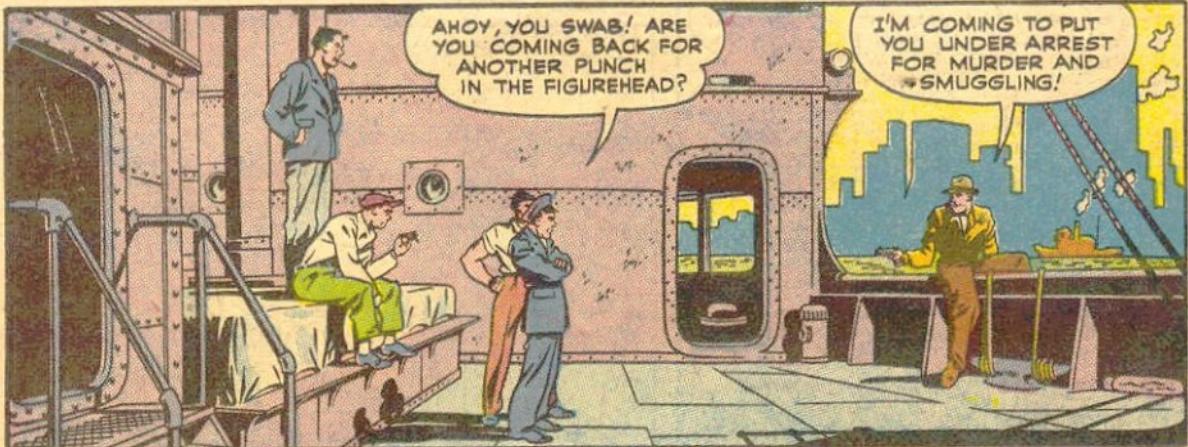
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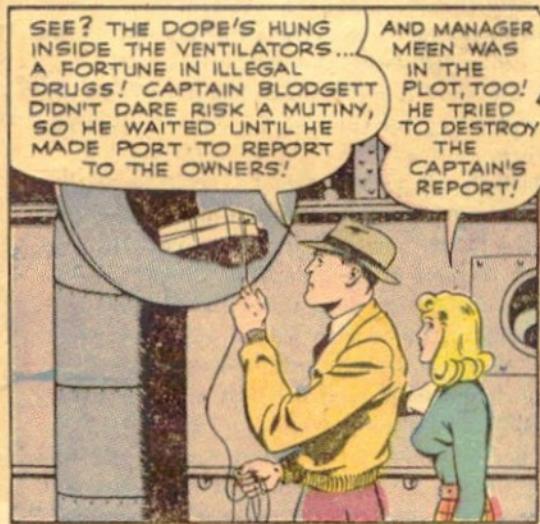
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RED MAN'S *Bull*

"I'M leary of it," said Colonel Lane of Lane's Mammoth Circus. "We'll be virtually stranded in that reservation, miles from any town."

Carnie Calahan, the Barker, chuckled. "I think you're afraid of Indians, Colonel. Did you forget that we are no longer on the war path with them?"

The colonel waved an exasperated hand. "Oh, don't be facetious, Carnie. Of course I'm not afraid of a lot of Indians! It's only that—that the show will be totally isolated, in case there is any trouble."

Carnie got up and yawned. "Personally I think booking that big reservation is one of the smartest things I've done in my career. Think of it, Colonel, fifteen thousand Indians—all paying customers!"

The colonel muttered to himself as Carnie swaggered out of the office tent. There were times, he thought, when a fellow couldn't please angels. This was one of them. What was wrong with Lane that he shivered at the thought of showing before Indians?

Major Midge trudged by with Lena, the fat lady in tow. He took three steps to her one.

"Hi, Midge—Lena," said Carnie. "What gives?"

"Is it true," said Midge, "that we're going to show before some Indian crowd?"

Carnie nodded.

"I'm frightened to death," said Lena. "Of all things, Indians!"

Carnie laughed. "You have nothing to worry about, Lena. I've heard Indians like their wives plump. But you're a little too much on the heavy side for the best of 'em!"

Lena made a swipe at him. "Go hide your fat head!" she cried, sweeping past in a huff.

Five days later the special circus train came around a bend and pulled into Sundance, the little town some miles from the reservation. The troupe piled out and went in search of hotel quarters.

Carnie and the colonel lingered a while under a wooden awning, like the ones which covered

the sidewalk on both sides of the dusty street. They leaned against a 'dobe wall.

"Well, Colonel, this is Sundance!" said Carnie casually.

"Yeah." Colonel Lane puckered his brow and gave a hasty glance up and down the street. "Look at 'em, sleeping standing up. Everywhere you look—Indians!"

"They're potential dollars, each of them," Carnie reminded him.

The colonel growled. "I wish we'd never have accepted this booking," he stated.

The next day the big circus wagons and trucks were unloaded from the flat cars and packed with the show's possessions. Then the caravan got under way for the reservation, ten miles out of town.

Black, beady eyes watched everything with a strange, unwinking moodiness. Colonel Lane didn't like it. He saw evil in those eyes. He read danger in their glowing depths.

The Arizona sun beat down like a blowtorch, so afternoon shows were called off. They would have to make it only nights—three of them.

The tent was packed the first night. The acts came off exceedingly well. But during the entire performance not a sound was heard from the audience. No one laughed or made a sound.

"It's uncanny," said Spudo, the four-armed man to Shali, the snake charmer, after the show had closed for the night. "Not one of 'em cracked a smile, even when I put on my best act."

Shali eyed the four-armed wonder with eyes very much like those of her crawling charges. "And who says you ever do anything that'd cause a chuckle?"

"Oh, I don't know," Spudo replied. "You do nothing but make people's flesh crawl."

"What's all this," demanded the Barker as he came into the tent. "Bickering again, you two?"

"No. Only trying to figure out why no one in that frozen audience cracked a grin," said Spudo.

"It was funny, wasn't it?" said the Barker. "I guess that's known as Indian stoicism; but it isn't good for the nerves of a troupe, eh?"

NATIONAL COMICS

Colonel Lane trudged in. He was scowling.

"That does it," he said. "That ties it. I won't show to such an unappreciative mob. I say I *won't!* I'll pack up and move out of here."

"They each paid a buck, Colonel," said Carnie softly. "Remember?"

Lane remembered. He remembered too that it had been the easiest crowd to handle he'd ever had.

So the show went on the next night as scheduled. Again the tent was jammed. Again the performances went off without a sound. And again the Lane Mammoth Circus took down a till full of dollars.

The third night was the same.

But still Col. Lane didn't like anything about it. There was something wrong. He was glad when the morning of the fourth day dawned, and the roustabouts began packing the show into the trucks.

And right here is where something happened. Chief Sit-Down-Too-Long rode up to Col. Lane on his knobby-kneed horse and said, "How."

"Heh?" said Lane.

"Show go away?"

Lane nodded.

The chief shook his head. "No go yet," he said.

"I don't getcha," said the colonel.

"Indian put on show. You stay see."

"You guys—uh—you people are putting on a show?"

The chief inclined his head a half-inch. "Do same. You stay." He turned his horse and rode off.

"Well, I'll be a dad-burned donkey!" said Lane.

By noon most of the show was loaded and the trucks were ready to start back to town. It was then that some three hundred mounted braves rode down out of the hills and with screaming and yelping began encircling the show. They rode like demons, and yelled louder.

"Say, what is this?" demanded the colonel of Carnie Calahan. "Are they going to give us trouble now?"

"I dunno what it means."

The colonel told him of his interesting chat with the chief that morning. Carnie looked startled.

"Then they mean to keep us here to see their show," he explained. "That's the gag. We'd better stay, Colonel. Indians are Indians still."

"Humph," snorted the colonel.

So that night the Indians put on their show. It was a real wild west sort of thing, with much riding, shooting of blanks, weird dances and knife throwing.

It was really a fine show and left the Mammoth Circus troupe a little bewildered. These Indians were excellent actors.

"You know what," said the colonel to the Barker, after the show had at last ended past midnight, "we could clean up with some of those chaps. Imagine how people would open their eyes at a real Indian troupe back east!"

The old chief came striding up to the colonel and Calahan. "You like show?" he asked.

"Fine, Chief," exclaimed Lane. "It was wonderful."

"Then you pay Indians dollar each," stated the chief. "Pay now. Tonight we give new show."

Calahan winked at Lane. "Better do as he says," he whispered. "Or we might not be able to get any of them in our show."

So the paymaster began paying out silver dollars to a never-ending string of Indians. There must have been three hundred of them.

That night it was the same. The show the Indians staged was in reality much like the first one, with some difference. The next morning the chief demanded payment again. And again the paymaster doled out some \$350.

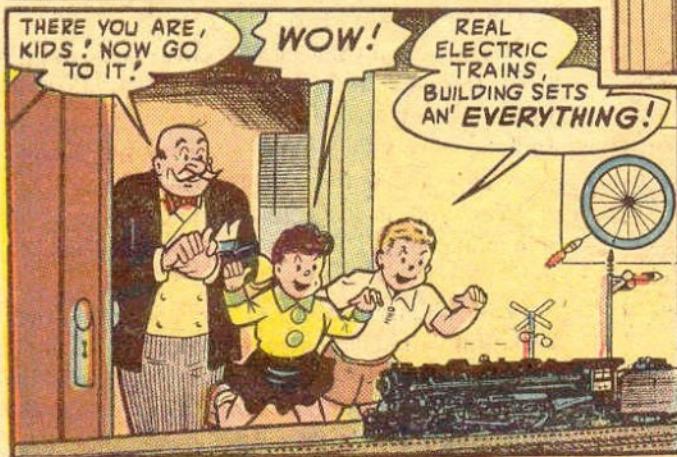
This happened the third night, too. Lane figured the fourth morning that he had paid out more than he'd taken in. But there was the spicy anticipation of signing up fifty or so good red actors. He and Calahan set out looking for the Indians, but after riding many miles they found no one except old men and babies. Not a brave anywhere.

"Carnie," said the colonel, sweat covered and tired from his long horseback ride. "I think we've been cleverly hoodwinked. We paid those Indians more than we took in. They put on that show just to get their money back."

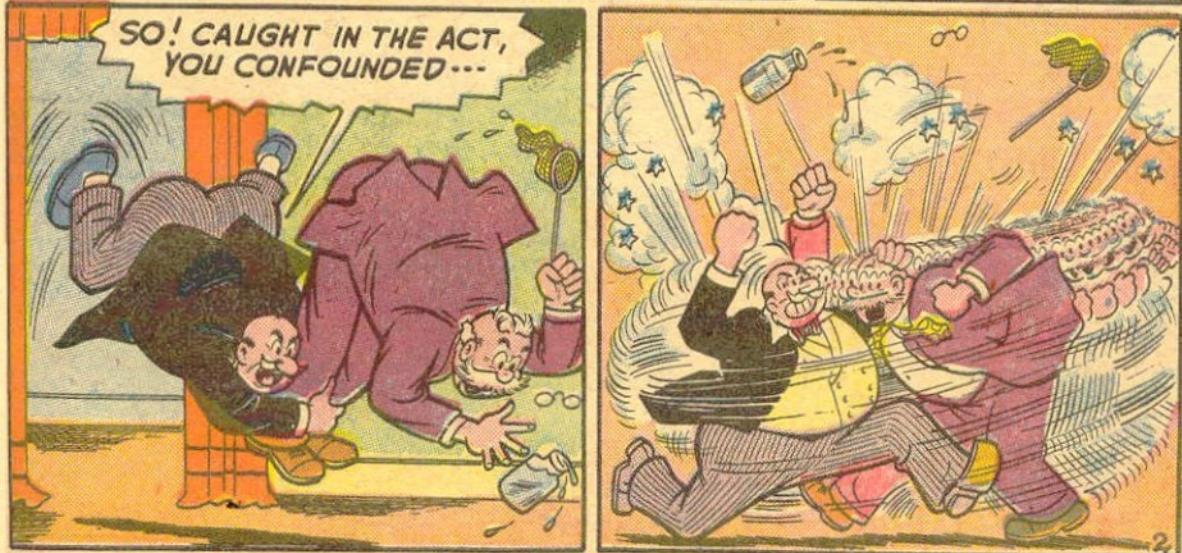
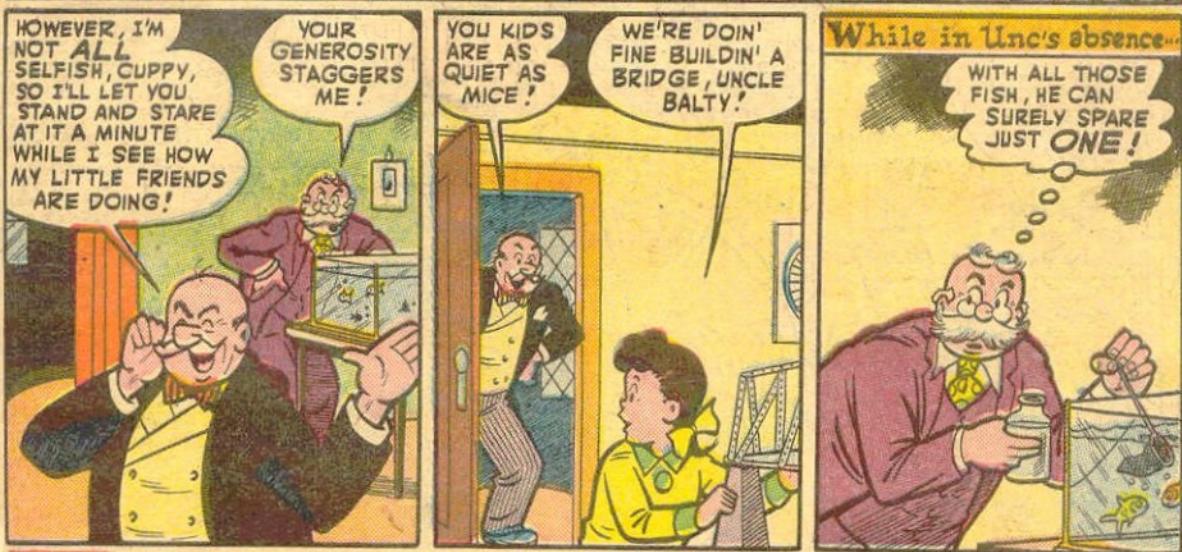
"Yes, and it looks like they don't want to join Mammoth. Colonel, I believe they slicked us!"

Colonel Lane looked sad for a moment, then broke into tired laughter. "Carnie, we thought we knew the show game. But those redskins slipped one over beautifully. They know the show game, too."

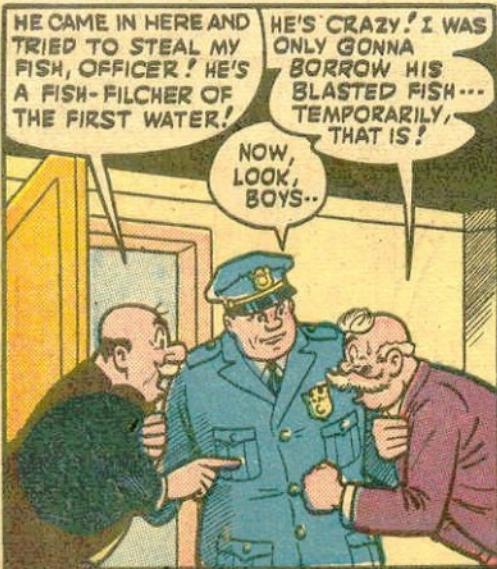
LASSIE



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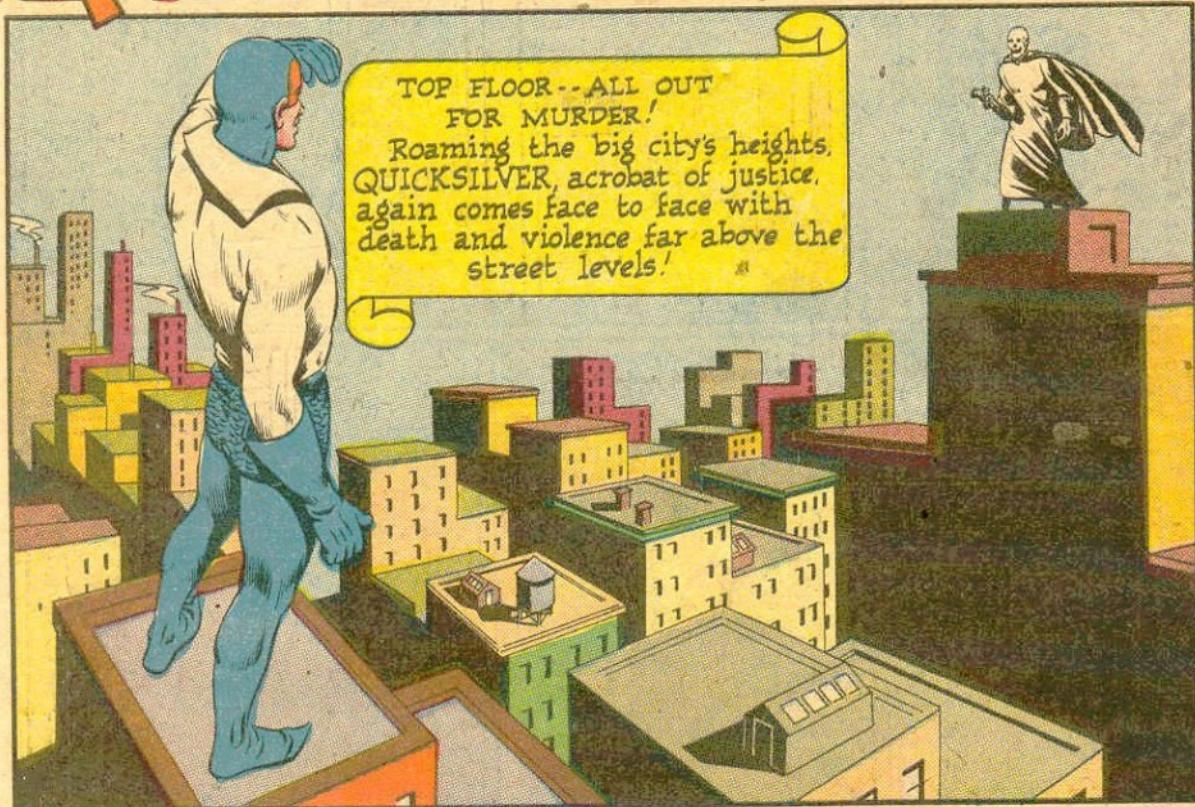


NATIONAL COMICS



NATIONAL COMICS

QUICKSILVER

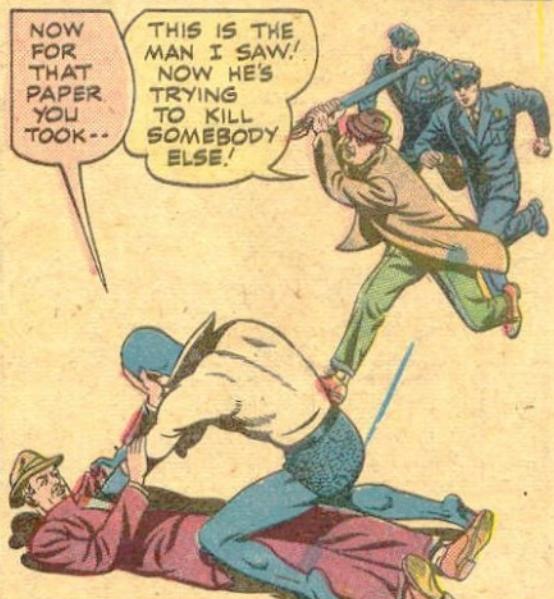
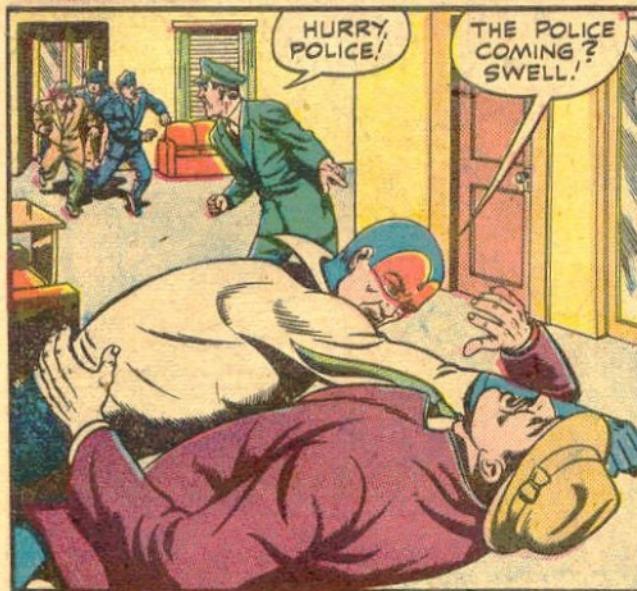


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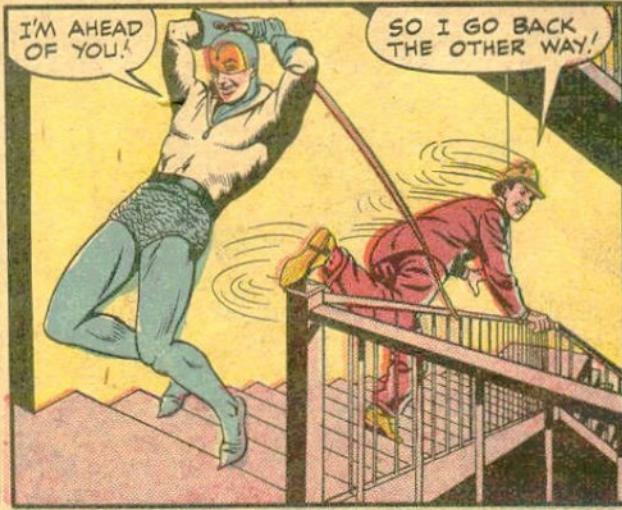




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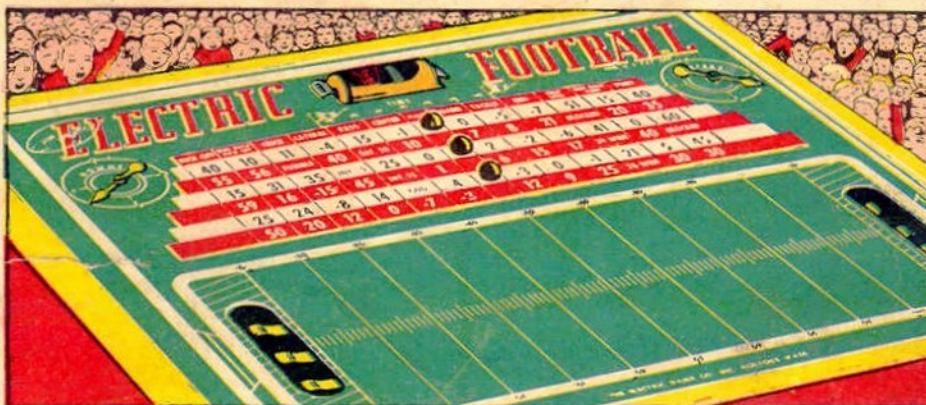
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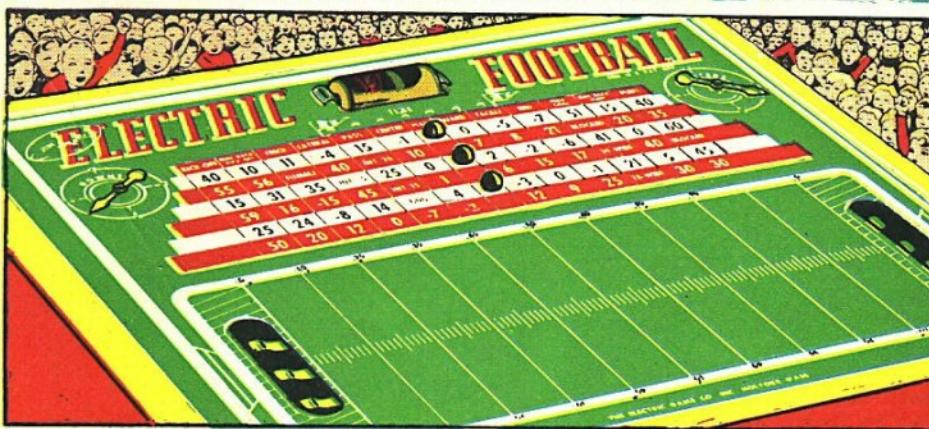
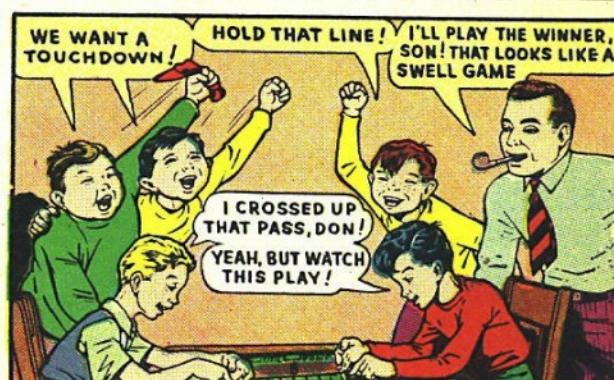
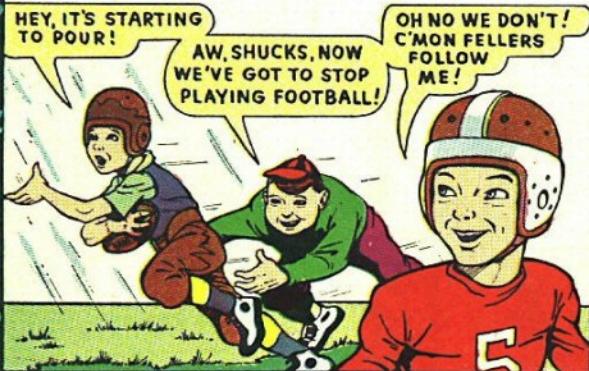
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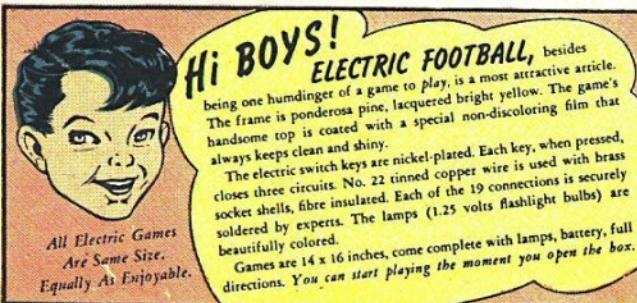
BOYS
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